

The Role of Emotions in Conflict Resolution

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Abstract: People usually conflict with interests, but also with accompanying emotions. Emotions are subjective experiences that result from the agreement or discrepancy between a person's needs or expectations and reality. They are internal states characterized by: physiological reactions, specific thoughts and behavioral expressions. These can make the individual believe in the reality of his subjective representations having important repercussions on the whole affective life. The role of emotions is to help us monitor our behavior and to regulate interactions with others. Properly managed emotions are not harmful; they are part of our life, help in the process of healing or eliminating stress.

Keywords: negative; positive emotions; behavior; conflict; stress

People usually conflict with interests, but also with accompanying emotions. When these emotions are not recognized by the opposing party and or the third party, first of all by active listening, they are added to other negative emotions: frustration, disappointment, rebellion. The conflict expresses the existence of misunderstandings, clashes of interests, antagonistic states, disputes, etc., which are imperceptible in the germinal and latent phase, which as they develop come to manifest „in sight”, moment from which, if not intervenes by appropriate means and techniques can degenerate into acts of violence that, most of the times, result in some material and moral damages for the parties involved (Șanța, 2012).

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The causes of a conflict are related to the purpose and objects that the parties pursue. Each party seeks to satisfy its own interests, which may take on divergent forms and characters. Emotions are subjective experiences that result from the agreement or discrepancy between a person's needs or expectations and reality.

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Affective states (emotions, feelings, passions) trigger, facilitate or inhibit the imagination. Sometimes the influence of emotional stress on the imagination is so great that it is subject to a logic other than the rational one, namely the affective logic, which allows us to overcome the rigid patterns of thinking. Emotional shocks produce ghosts, images being sometimes the expression of uncontrollable dispositions, the effect of amplifying passions. All this can make the individual believe in the reality of his subjective representations having important repercussions on the whole affective life (Zlate, 2004).

Negative emotions such as anger, fear, distrust, contempt, embarrassment, shame, hurt pride, disappointment can block obtaining agreement by deviating from the real purpose, finding the solution, and orienting the return of the offense, revenge or systematic rejection of any proposal. When the parties perceive threats to their values, status and identity, they react through strong emotions, which become lasting feelings and maintain an insoluble or prolonged conflict; when we humiliate or despise the other's point of view, he feels unresponsive, humiliated, maybe even ashamed, which complicates the situation, as shame usually causes prolonged conflicts

Positive emotions facilitate agreement and implicitly reach the realistic, instrumental goal. They can have constructive effects, in different ways:

- a. If the negotiator is well-disposed, he is less aggressive and better able to induce cooperative attitudes towards disputants.
- b. If the disputants have positive emotions, they are more willing to solve the problem, more ingenious, more willing to respect the position of the opponent and more capable of intellectual operation.
- c. An agreement can be reached if the positive reinforcement, the rewards of resolving the conflict are made known to the opponents: establishing good personal

relationships, trust, respect, recognition, satisfaction, feeling of belonging, reputation.

Depression manifests not only through negative moods, but also through cognitive, behavioral and emotional symptoms. When these symptoms are severe, chronic or occur repeatedly, they may interfere with interpersonal relationships or our work.

Cognitive symptoms of depression include self-criticism, feelings of helplessness and futility, suicidal thoughts, difficulty concentrating, and generalized negativity.

Behavioral changes associated with depression include social withdrawal, diminishing previously enjoyable activities, and difficulty engaging in other activities.

Physiological symptoms associated with depression include sleep disorders such as insomnia, sleeping over or under normal resting time, continuous tiredness, eating disorders and fluctuations in body weight.

The emotional symptoms associated with depression are feelings of sadness, irritability, anger, guilt and nervousness.

The effective ways to reduce depression are:

- cognitive restructuring;
- medication;
- improving interpersonal relationships;
- scheduling activities.

Changing the way you think is the main goal of cognitive therapy for depression. Assessing the moods during the various activities, noting them in an activity calendar can help to discover the links between behavior and depression. Pleasant activities or activities that allow us to accomplish something can help us feel better when we are depressed.

Anxiety disorders include phobias, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessions, compulsions, and generalized anxiety disorder. The term anxiety also describes the short periods of nervousness or fear we experience when we face difficult situations in our lives.

Symptoms of anxiety include muscle tension, accelerated pulse, dizziness, avoidance behavior, and nervousness. All the physical, behavioral or cognitive changes we

experience when we are anxious are part of the specific anxiety responses: „fight, run or freeze”. The three types of response are adaptive when faced with dangers.

Panic is extreme anxiety, accompanied by catastrophic interpretations of physical and mental symptoms, such as „I will have a heart attack”, „I will die”, „I lose my mind”.

Some people with anxiety disorders tend to perform certain rituals (for example, checking the doors or repeated hand washing) or avoiding certain situations (for example, bridges, railways, airplanes or social situations) to deal with these disorders (the level (D. David, 2003).

Anger integrates five dimensions correlated with each other and operating simultaneously (Cândeă, & Cândeă, 2005):

- Thinking, cognition - what we are thinking at that moment.
- Emotion - the state of agitation, dissatisfaction, irritation that anger generates.
- Communication - how we express our state verbally to make it known to others.
- Affect - how we perceive the world around us when we are in this state.
- Behavior - how we act when we are angry.

Anger as any emotional state is contagious and is transmitted from one person to another especially through the tone of the voice, gestures and through the mimicry of the face which can affect the state of an entire group.

Ways to combat non-productive behaviors recommended in conflict situations in order to analyze by comparison their own behavior:

- ask questions until we make sure that both parties understood the situation in all;
- aspects, including the emotional one;
- we ignore some hostile remarks if these are not important for conflict resolution;
- we unmask an incorrect tactic by saying that we have observed it;
- speak calmly and, if necessary, use our humor without offending;

- When the interlocutor expresses a point of view that we do not agree with, instead of starting the dispute, we ask to be explained why he thinks things are so.

Anger is characterized by muscle tension, accelerated pulse, high blood pressure, defensive or attacking attitude. The cognitive component of anger includes the perception that you have been wronged or that others are offending or attacking you. Anger can evaluate from irritability to nervous breakdowns.

Effective anger management methods include (Christine Padesky, Dennis Greenberger, 2011):

- cognitive restructuring;
- early preparation for events with high emotional risk;
- imagery;
- recognition of early signs of anger;
- breaks;
- assertive training;
- couples therapy.

The role of emotions is to help us monitor our behavior and to regulate interactions with others. Properly managed emotions are not harmful; they are part of our life, help in the process of healing or eliminating stress.

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